

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated November 23, 2009. Claims 1 to 66 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 6, 15, 17, 29 to 31, 36, 45, 47 and 59 to 66 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 5, 31 to 35 and 61 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0055888 (Beran) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0026410 (Woloshin). Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Beran in view of Woloshin and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,754,857 (Gadol). Claims 6 to 30, 36 to 60 and 62 to 66 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Beran in view of Woloshin and further in view of eFlow article (March 2000). The rejections are respectfully traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Referring specifically to claim language, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to an information processing apparatus which communicates with an approval service provider terminal. The information processing apparatus includes receiving means for receiving an approval service object from the approval service provider terminal, the approval service object including a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal. The information processing apparatus further includes storage means for storing the approval service object received by the receiving means, and approval request preparing means for preparing an approval request based on values entered by a user of the information processing apparatus. The information processing apparatus also includes decision means for deciding, in the information

processing apparatus, whether or not to approve the prepared approval request, by applying the prepared approval request to the decision condition included in the stored approval service object, and output means for outputting a result of the decision of the decision means.

Claims 31 and 61 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the apparatus of Claim 1.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or suggest all the features of Claims 1, 31 and 61, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or suggest at least the features of an information processing apparatus which includes receiving means/step for receiving an approval service object from an approval service provider terminal, the approval service object including a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal, and decision means/step for deciding, in the information processing apparatus, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, by applying the prepared approval request to the decision condition included in the stored approval service object.

In this regard, Beran is merely seen to disclose transmitting a request provided by a requisitioner 300 to a proper approver 304 for approval of the request. (See paragraphs [0047] to [0050] of Beran). However, Beran is not seen to disclose or suggest that an information processing apparatus which includes decision means/step for deciding, in the information processing apparatus, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, much less an information processing apparatus that decides whether or not to approve a prepared approval request by applying the prepared approval request to a decision condition included in a stored approval service object. In addition, Beran is not

seen to disclose or suggest an information processing apparatus which includes receiving means/step for receiving an approval service object from an approval service provider terminal, the approval service object including a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal.

Woloshin is not seen to remedy the above-described deficiencies of Beran. In this regard, Woloshin is seen to disclose that a merchant, at his/her computer, “clicks” on a link, and is then hyperlinked to a Merchant Service Provider’s Online Merchant Application Server’s 200 landing page. The merchant then completes application forms, and data entered into the forms is validated and captured in an application database 208 residing on the Merchant Service Provider’s Online Merchant Application Server 200. (See paragraph [0019] of Woloshin). The application forms are then imported from the application database to the Merchant Service Provider’s system 300, and more particularly, into a database application set 302. The application forms then go through an auto-approval process 304 performed by the Merchant Service Provider. (See paragraph [0021] of Woloshin). The auto-approval process entails immediate analysis of data input by the applicant-merchant to essentially determine the risk involved in approving the merchant. (See paragraph [0022] of Woloshin). Thus, in Woloshin, approval of a merchant’s application is performed by an auto-approval process at the Merchant Service Provider Side, and is not performed at the merchant’s computer. In contrast, as provided in Claims 1, 31 and 61, an information processing apparatus decides, in the information processing apparatus, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, by applying the prepared approval request to a decision condition included in a stored approval service object, in which the approval service object was received from an approval service provider terminal.

Therefore, Woloshin is not seen to disclose or suggest an information processing apparatus which includes receiving means/step for receiving an approval service object from an approval service provider terminal, the approval service object including a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal, and decision means/step for deciding, in the information processing apparatus, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, by applying the prepared approval request to the decision condition included in the stored approval service object.

The remaining applied references, namely Gadol and the eFlow article, are not seen to cure the deficiencies of Beran and Woloshin. In this regard, Gadol is seen to disclose a system and method for automating a workflow by distributing tasks required for execution of the workflow over servers and clients connected on a network. In addition, the eFlow article is merely seen to disclose a platform that supports specification, deployment, and management of composite e-services. However, Gadol and/or the eFlow article are not seen to add anything that, when combined with Beran and/or Woloshin, assuming, *arguendo*, that such could be combined, would have resulted in at least the features of an information processing apparatus which includes receiving means/step for receiving an approval service object from an approval service provider terminal, the approval service object including a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal, and decision means/step for deciding, in the information processing apparatus, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, by applying the prepared approval request to the decision condition included in the stored approval service object.

Accordingly, Claims 1, 31 and 61 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Amended independent Claim 6 is directed to an approval system comprising a service server, an approval service provider terminal and a client terminal, wherein the service server manages plural approval service objects registered by the approval service provider terminal. The client terminal includes approval request preparing means for preparing an approval request based on values entered by a user of the client terminal, and acquisition means for searching for and acquiring an approval service object matching the approval request, among the plural approval service objects registered in the service server, wherein the approval service object includes a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal. The client terminal further includes decision performing means for performing a decision, in the client terminal, as to whether or not to approve the approval request by applying the approval request to the decision condition included in the acquired approval service object, and output means for outputting a result of the decision of the decision performing means.

Claims 36 and 62 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the system of Claim 6.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or suggest all the features of Claims 6, 36 and 62, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or suggest at least the features of a client terminal which includes acquisition means/step for searching for and acquiring an approval service object matching an approval request, among plural approval service objects registered in a service server, wherein the approval service object includes a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of

an approval service provider terminal, and decision performing means/step for performing a decision, in the client terminal, as to whether or not to approve the approval request by applying the approval request to the decision condition included in the acquired approval service object.

As discussed above, none of Beran, Woloshin, Gadol and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose or suggest the features of an information processing apparatus which includes receiving means/step for receiving an approval service object from an approval service provider terminal, the approval service object including a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal, and decision means/step for deciding, in the information processing apparatus, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, by applying the prepared approval request to the decision condition included in the stored approval service object. For substantially the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claims 1, 31 and 61, none of Beran, Woloshin, Gadol and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose or suggest the features of a client terminal which includes acquisition means/step for searching for and acquiring an approval service object matching an approval request, among plural approval service objects registered in a service server, wherein the approval service object includes a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of an approval service provider terminal, and decision performing means/step for performing a decision, in the client terminal, as to whether or not to approve the approval request by applying the approval request to the decision condition included in the acquired approval service object.

Accordingly, Claims 6, 36 and 62 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Amended independent Claim 15 is directed to a service server which communicates with an approval service provider terminal and a client terminal. The service server includes approval service storage means for storing plural approval service objects registered by the approval service provider terminal, wherein each of the approval service objects includes a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal. The service server further includes search and transmission means for searching for an approval service object which matches an approval request based on a search instruction received from the client terminal and transmitting the approval service object located by the search to the client terminal. The client terminal receives the transmitted approval service object and decides whether or not to approve the approval request by applying the approval request to the decision condition included in the received approval service object, and the approval request is prepared based on values entered by a user.

Claims 45 and 63 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the server of Claim 15.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or suggest all the features of Claims 15, 45 and 63, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or suggest at least the features of a service server which includes search and transmission means/step for searching for an approval service object which matches an approval request based on a search instruction received from a client terminal and transmitting the approval service object located by the search to the client terminal, and the

client terminal receives the transmitted approval service object and decides whether or not to approve the approval request by applying the approval request to a decision condition, which has been set by a setting unit of an approval service provider terminal, included in the received approval service object.

As discussed above, none of Beran, Woloshin, Gadol and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose or suggest the features of an information processing apparatus which includes receiving means/step for receiving an approval service object from an approval service provider terminal, the approval service object including a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal, and decision means/step for deciding, in the information processing apparatus, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, by applying the prepared approval request to the decision condition included in the stored approval service object. For substantially the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claims 1, 31 and 61, none of Beran, Woloshin, Gadol and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose or suggest the features of a service server which includes search and transmission means/step for searching for an approval service object which matches an approval request based on a search instruction received from a client terminal and transmitting the approval service object located by the search to the client terminal, and the client terminal receives the transmitted approval service object and decides whether or not to approve the approval request by applying the approval request to a decision condition, which has been set by a setting unit of an approval service provider terminal, included in the received approval service object.

Accordingly, Claims 15, 45 and 63 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Amended independent Claim 17 is directed to an approval system comprising an approval service provider terminal, a service server, a client terminal and a request server, wherein the service server manages plural approval service objects registered by the approval service provider terminal, and wherein each of the approval service objects includes a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal. The client terminal includes approval request preparing means for preparing an approval request based on values entered by a user of the client terminal, and the request server includes approval request storage means for storing the approval request prepared in the client terminal. The request server further includes acquisition means for searching for and acquiring an approval service object matching the approval request stored in the approval request storage means, among the plural approval service objects registered in the service server, decision performing means for performing a decision as to whether or not to approve the approval request by applying the approval request to the decision condition included in the acquired approval service object, and output means for outputting a result of the decision of the decision performing means.

Claims 47 and 64 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the system of Claim 17.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or suggest all the features of Claims 17, 47 and 64, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or suggest at least the features of a request server which includes acquisition means/step for searching for and acquiring an approval service object matching an approval

request stored in an approval request storage means/step, among plural approval service objects registered in a service server, and decision performing means/step for performing a decision as to whether or not to approve the approval request by applying the approval request to a decision condition, which has been set by a setting unit of an approval service provider terminal, included in the acquired approval service object.

As discussed above, none of Beran, Woloshin, Gadol and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose or suggest the features of an information processing apparatus which includes receiving means/step for receiving an approval service object from an approval service provider terminal, the approval service object including a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal, and decision means/step for deciding, in the information processing apparatus, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, by applying the prepared approval request to the decision condition included in the stored approval service object. For substantially the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claims 1, 31 and 61, none of Beran, Woloshin, Gadol and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose or suggest the features of a request server which includes acquisition means/step for searching for and acquiring an approval service object matching an approval request stored in an approval request storage means/step, among plural approval service objects registered in a service server, and decision performing means/step for performing a decision as to whether or not to approve the approval request by applying the approval request to a decision condition, which has been set by a setting unit of an approval service provider terminal, included in the acquired approval service object.

Accordingly, Claims 17, 47 and 64 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Amended independent Claim 29 is directed to an approval system comprising an approval service provider terminal, a service server and a client terminal, wherein the service server manages plural approval service objects registered by the approval service provider terminal, and wherein each of the approval service objects includes a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider. The client terminal includes approval request preparing means for preparing an approval request based on values entered by a user of the client terminal, search means for searching for an approval service object matching the approval request, among the plural approval service objects registered in the service server, transmission means for transmitting the approval request to the service server, in the case that the approval service object is located by the search means, and reception means for receiving the result of approval decision for the approval request transmitted from the service server. The service server includes decision performing means for performing the approval decision for the approval request transmitted from the client terminal by applying the approval request to the decision condition included in the approval service object matching the approval request, and transmission means for transmitting a result of the approval decision to the client terminal.

Claims 59 and 65 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the system of Claim 29.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or suggest all the features of Claims 29, 59 and 65, and in particular, is not seen to

disclose or suggest at least the features of a client terminal which includes search means/step for searching for an approval service object matching an approval request, among plural approval service objects registered in a service server, and the service server which includes decision performing means/step for performing an approval decision for the approval request transmitted from the client terminal by applying the approval request to a decision condition, which has been set by a setting unit of an approval service provider, included in the approval service object matching the approval request.

As discussed above, none of Beran, Woloshin, Gadol and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose or suggest the features of an information processing apparatus which includes receiving means/step for receiving an approval service object from an approval service provider terminal, the approval service object including a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal, and decision means/step for deciding, in the information processing apparatus, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, by applying the prepared approval request to the decision condition included in the stored approval service object. For substantially the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claims 1, 31 and 61, none of Beran, Woloshin, Gadol and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose or suggest the features of a client terminal which includes search means/step for searching for an approval service object matching an approval request, among plural approval service objects registered in a service server, and the service server which includes decision performing means/step for performing an approval decision for the approval request transmitted from the client terminal by applying the approval request to a decision condition, which has been set by a setting unit of an

approval service provider, included in the approval service object matching the approval request.

Accordingly, Claims 29, 59 and 65 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Amended independent Claim 30 is directed to an approval system comprising an approval service provider terminal, a service server, a client terminal and a request server. The service server manages plural approval service objects registered by the approval service provider terminal, each of the approval service objects includes a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider, and the client terminal includes approval request preparing means for preparing an approval request based on values entered by a user of the client terminal. The request server includes approval request storage means for storing the approval request prepared in the client terminal, search means for searching for an approval service object matching the approval request stored in the approval request storage means, among the plural approval service objects registered in the service server, transmission means for transmitting the approval service object to the service server, in the case that the approval service object is located by the search means, and reception means for receiving the result of approval decision for the approval request from the service server. The service server includes decision performing means for performing the approval decision for the approval request transmitted from the request server by applying the approval request to the decision condition included in the approval service object matching the approval request, and transmission means for transmitting a result of the approval decision to the request server.

Claims 60 and 66 are directed to a method and a computer program, respectively, substantially in accordance with the system of Claim 30.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or suggest all the features of Claims 30, 60 and 66, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or suggest at least the features of a request server which includes search means for searching for an approval service object matching an approval request stored in an approval request storage means/step, among plural approval service objects registered in a service server, and the service server which includes decision performing means/step for performing an approval decision for the approval request transmitted from the request server by applying the approval request to a decision condition, which has been set by a setting unit of an approval service provider, included in the approval service object matching the approval request.

As discussed above, none of Beran, Woloshin, Gadol and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose or suggest the features of an information processing apparatus which includes receiving means/step for receiving an approval service object from an approval service provider terminal, the approval service object including a decision condition which has been set by a setting unit of the approval service provider terminal, and decision means/step for deciding, in the information processing apparatus, whether or not to approve a prepared approval request, by applying the prepared approval request to the decision condition included in the stored approval service object. For substantially the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claims 1, 31 and 61, none of Beran, Woloshin, Gadol and/or the eFlow article, either alone or in combination, are seen to disclose or suggest the features of a request server which

includes search means for searching for an approval service object matching an approval request stored in an approval request storage means/step, among plural approval service objects registered in a service server, and the service server which includes decision performing means/step for performing an approval decision for the approval request transmitted from the request server by applying the approval request to a decision condition, which has been set by a setting unit of an approval service provider, included in the approval service object matching the approval request.

Accordingly, Claims 30, 60 and 66 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the claims, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

Turning to a formal matter, Applicants respectfully request that the next Office communication include an initialed Form PTO-1449 indicating that the documents cited in the Information Disclosure Statement dated May 2, 2002 have been considered.

No other matters being raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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